

Arrest Warrants Were Held Elsewhere

2 Slain Agents Warrantless

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PINE RIDGE, S.D., June 29—The two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents slain in a shootout Thursday at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation were not carrying arrest warrants, the FBI disclosed today.

FBI spokesman Tom Coll said warrants had been issued for the four men the agents were seeking at the time of the shootout in which an Indian also was killed, but the warrants were being held elsewhere.

Earlier the FBI here and at Washington, D.C., headquarters had stated the agents were at the shootout scene "to serve warrants."

Coll said it is a common practice for agents "offhandedly referred to as serving warrants to actually not have them on their person." He termed his disclosure "just a clarification."

Coll also disclosed that the 16 to 20 persons sought in the shootout may not have all been involved in the slaying of the agents. "Some may merely be wanted on charges of assault" for firing at other FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs agents in the ensuing gun battle, he said.

As law enforcement officials pressed the search for the suspects today, a petition demanding that heavily armed FBI agents leave the Oglala Sioux reservation immediately received strong local support at a rally near the shooting scene.

However, Coll said the FBI had no intention of leaving the area until we finish our job."

Coll categorically denied five specific complaints in the petition, drawn up by Frank Starr, a member of the Sioux Tribal Council from White Clay.

The Indians charged FBI agents have:

- Invaded their privacy by frequent questioning and by searching private property without warrants.

- Privately spread statements like: "One more dead Indian, and we'll be even."

- Been frightening Indian children by creating "combat like" conditions through the display of handguns and the wearing of combat fatigues.

- Never protected, only harassed, the Sioux nation.

- Persisted in treating all Indians "as criminals" under a general attitude of harassment.

As the petition was circulated, various tribal leaders quietly sought outside help "to help change the tense combat atmosphere," said Gerald Onefeather, former president of the Tribal Council. "The FBI has been playing a very heavy role."

Kendall Cumming, acting superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the reservation, said he would try to convince the FBI to "assume a more modified posture," but Coll, in a press briefing moments earlier, had insisted the display of guns and other par-

amilitary equipment "is an absolute necessity."

As for the possible damaging psychological effects on young Indian children, Coll asserted: "I don't know what it was before, or what they saw before we got here, but we sure can't do our work in business suits."

Since Thursday afternoon, when agents Ronald A. Williams and Jack R. Coler, both 28 and both of Los Angeles, were killed, a steadily growing number of FBI agents have been combing the countryside of the picturesque 4,300-square-mile reservation. Some of the agents are based in offices as far away as New York.

Some 150 agents—the FBI refuses to list an exact number—have been joined periodically by an equal number of local law enforcement personnel and BIA police. They have been working in teams of five to 12 men. Some of the teams are of the so-called SWAT (Special Weapons Attack Team) variety.

Richard Held, special agent in charge of the Chicago office, who is directing the search, noted: "The men are obviously highly motivated. Some have worked 48 straight hours without sleep."

A young agent from Omaha, who said he had been Coler's roommate the past month and was the second man on the shootout scene Thursday, said he "couldn't think of a time in my career when I've been more motivated." He asked that his name be withheld.

Authorities said the Indian

slain during the gun battle had been positively identified as Joseph Bedell Stuntz, 24, registered with the Lapwai Indian Agency in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Previously he had been tentatively identified as Joe Roberts, or Joe Killright, of Seattle, where Stuntz reportedly once lived.

Officials also disclosed that both at the shootout Thursday and again Saturday they tried to negotiate for the safe surrender of the suspects.

Cummings said it was his decision—after waiting about 2½ hours Thursday—to order an assault on three cabins after the occupants, who had been shooting at government agents, refused to surrender.

As agents stormed the cabins, the occupants fled.

Details of Saturday's negotiating attempt were sketchy. Both Cummings and Coll said there were attempts "to avoid bloodshed and effect a safe surrender of the suspects."